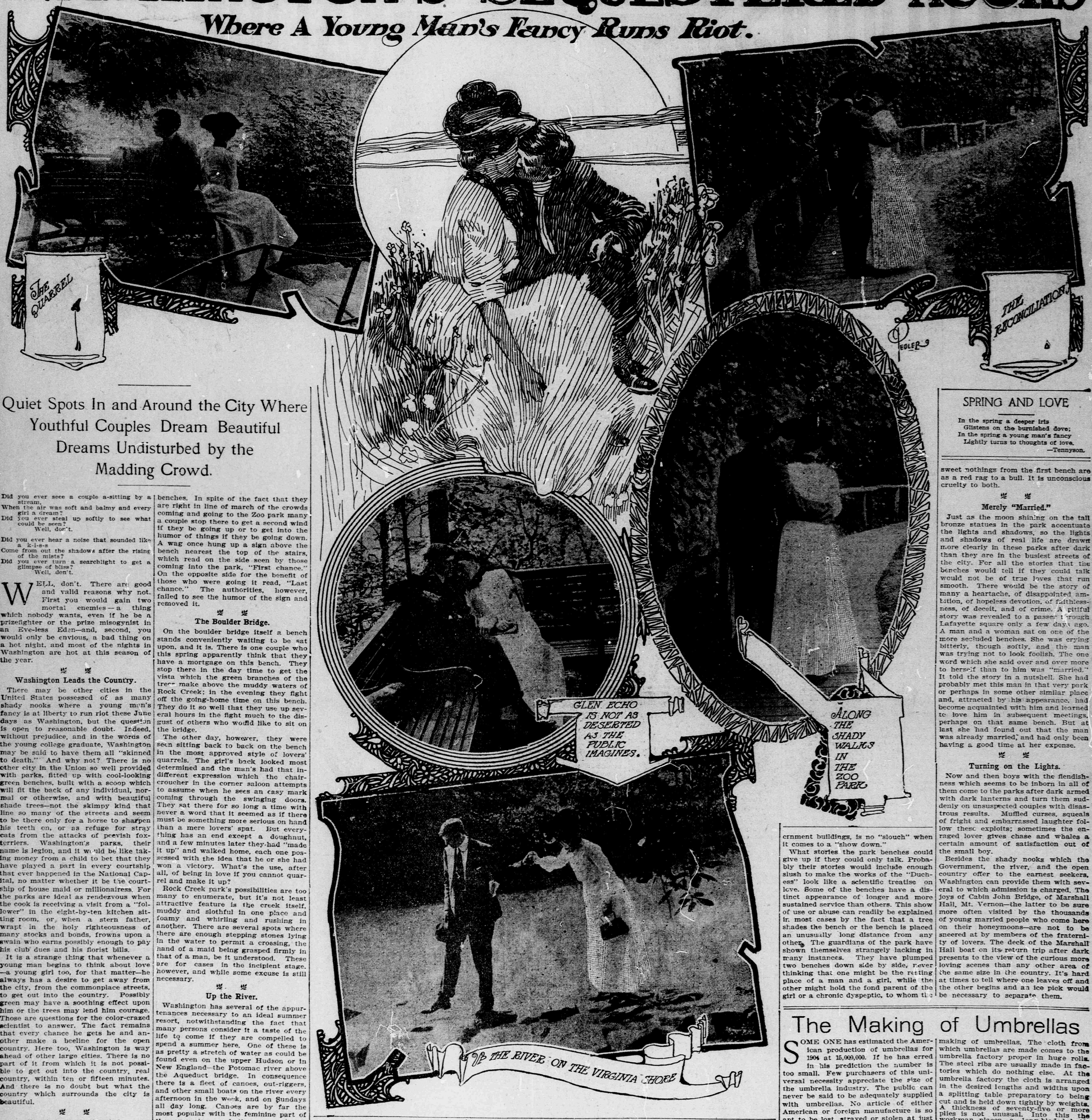
WASHINGTON'S SEQUESTERED NOOKS

Where A Young Man's Fancy Runs Riot.



Quiet Spots In and Around the City Where Youthful Couples Dream Beautiful Dreams Undisturbed by the Madding Crowd.

Did you ever seee a couple a-sitting by a stream,
When the air was soft and balmy and every girl a dream?
Did you ever steal up softly to see what could be seen?
Well, don't.

Did you ever hear a noise that sounded like a k-i-s-s
Come from out the shadows after the rising of the mists?
Did you ever turn a searchlight to get a glimpse of bliss?
Well, don't.

WELL, don't. There are good and valid reasons why not. First you would gain two mortal enemies—a thing which nobody wants, even if he be a prizefighter or the prize misogynist in an Eve-less Eden—and, second, you would only be envious, a bad thing on a hot night, and most of the nights in Washington are hot at this season of the year.

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Washington Leads the Country.

There may be other cities in the United States possessed of as many shady nooks where a young man's fancy is at liberty to run riot these June days as Washington, but the question is open to reasonable doubt. Indeed, without prejudice, and in the words of the young college graduate, Washington may be said to have them all "skinned to death." And why not? There is no other city in the Union so well provided with parks, fitted up with cool-looking green benches, built with a scoop which will fit the back of any individual, normal or otherwise, and with beautiful shade trees—not the skimpy kind that line so many of the streets and seem to be there only for a horse to sharpen his teeth on, or as refuge for stray cats from the attacks of peevish fox-terriers. Washington's parks, their name is legion, and it would be like taking money from a child to bet that they have played a part in every courtship that ever happened in the National Capital, no matter whether it be the courtship of house maid or millionaires. For the parks are ideal as rendezvous when the cook is receiving a visit from a "follower" in the eight-by-ten kitchen sitting room, or, when a stern father, wrapt in the holy righteousness of many stocks and bonds, frowns upon a swain who earns possibly enough to pay his club dues and his florist bills.

It is a strange thing that whenever a young man begins to think about love—a young girl too, for that matter—he always has a desire to get away from the city, from the commonplace streets, to get out into the country. Possibly green may have a soothing effect upon him or the trees may lend him courage. Those are questions for the color-crazed scientist to answer. The fact remains that every chance he gets he and another make a beeline for the open country. Here too, Washington is way ahead of other large cities. There is no part of it from which it is not possible to get out into the country, real country, within ten or fifteen minutes. And there is no doubt but what the country which surrounds the city is beautiful.

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The Animals Don't Mind.

In a category of the shady nooks in and about Washington, Rock Creek Park must figure at the top of the list in the favor of those who are afflicted with the love bug. Its drives and walks and above all the possibilities which it possesses along the line of real rocks against which to lean back, and real woods in which to get lost, give it the prominence which it deserves. It is accessible from all parts of the city and can be reached much more quickly than the more widly gay Chevy Chase Lake.

It would be difficult to say how many young people visit the park during the spring and summer as well as how many times some go there. Here and there the superintendent of the park has kindly put up signs "To the animals." Unless the man and the girl have reached that stage where they are bent upon improving their minds so as to be worthy of one another, they will avoid the paths to which these signs point—probably the animals don't care if they do.

Close to the Eighteenth street entrance to the park is a long stairway which winds round and round to end in what is known as the boulder bridge. All the way down this stairway are found benches. In spite of the fact that they are right in line of march of the crowds coming and going to the Zoo park many a couple stop there to get a second wind if they be going up or to get into the humor of things if they be going down. A wag once hung up a sign above the bench nearest the top of the stairs, which read on the side seen by those coming into the park, "First chance." On the opposite side for the benefit of those who were going it read, "Last chance." The authorities, however, failed to see the humor of the sign and removed it.

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The Boulder Bridge.

On the boulder bridge itself a bench stands conveniently waiting to be sat upon, and it is. There is one couple who this spring apparently think that they have a mortgage on this bench. They stop there in the day time to get the vista which the green branches of the trees make above the muddy waters of Rock Creek; in the evening they fight off the going-home time on this bench. They do it so well that they use up several hours in the fight much to the disgust of others who would like to sit on the bridge.

The other day, however, they were seen sitting back to back on the bench in the most approved style of lovers' quarrels. The girl's back looked most determined and the man's had that indifferent expression which the chair-croucher in the corner saloon attempts to assume when he sees an easy mark coming through the swinging doors. They sat there for so long a time with never a word that it seemed as if there must be something more serious on hand than a mere lovers' spat. But everything has an end except a doughnut, and a few minutes later they had "made it up" and walked home, each one possessed with the idea that he or she had won a victory. What's the use, after all, of being in love if you cannot quarrel and make it up?

Rock Creek park's possibilities are too many to enumerate, but it's not least attractive feature is the creek itself, muddy and slothful in one place and foamy and whirling and rushing in another. There are several spots where there are enough stepping stones lying in the water to permit a crossing, the hand of a maid being grasped firmly in that of a man, be it understood. These are for cases in the incipient stage, however, and while some excuse is still necessary.

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Up the River.

Washington has several of the appurtenances necessary to an ideal summer resort, notwithstanding the fact that many persons consider it a taste of the life to come if they are compelled to spend a summer here. One of these is as pretty a stretch of water as could be found even on the upper Hudson or in New England—the Potomac river above the Aqueduct bridge. In consequence there is a fleet of canoes, out-riggers, and other small boats on the river every afternoon in the week, and on Sundays all day long. Canoes are by far the most popular with the feminine part of the excursion, and the man who is lucky enough to own one of these frail craft is pretty sure to find a girl willing to hunt for shady nooks along the Virginia and Maryland shores with him.

The first canoe was built for two persons—there's no doubt of it. Possibly it was manned by Father Adam and Mother Eve. Since then there have been war canoes, and the modern makers build canoes that hold four or even six persons, but these are perversions of the real use of the canoe. There is something about the canoes up the river that gives them dead away. They are so comfortably lazy even for the paddler—there's as much difference between a canoe and an out-rigger as there is between an ambling, long-tailed horse you can drive with one hand and a spirited span that nearly pulls both your arms out of their sockets. Then there's always a spice of danger about them, they tip easily, which invariably appeals to the feminine mind.

Scores of canoes are beached along the Virginia shore as the sun sinks behind the high bluffs that come almost to the water's edge. Some of the parties elect to go ashore, but the majority refuse to move themselves from the bottoms of the canoes. There they sit, or rather lie, and look at each other. There's something about a canoe stare that makes it different from anything else of the kind. It is apt to be long sustained and unconscious particularly of events that are going on outside of the canoe.

Under the shadow of the Capitol itself and the grounds which surround the big white building it is possible to find enough "spoons" to stock a silversmith's shop. On a moonlight night they hang around the Capitol steps until the early hours of the morning. The watchmen pay no more attention to them than if they were flies crawling up the dome. They are such an old, old story. Still farther east Lincoln Park is a favorite haunt. Georgetown has its Lovers' Lane and the Mall, which surrounds the Government buildings, is no "slouch" when it comes to a "show down."

What stories the park benches could give up if they could only talk. Probably their stories would include enough slush to make the works of the "Duchess" look like a scientific treatise on love. Some of the benches have a distinct appearance of longer and more sustained service than others. This show of use or abuse can readily be explained in most cases by the fact that a tree shades the bench or the bench is placed an unusually long distance from any other. The guardians of the park have shown themselves strangely lacking in many instances. They have plumped two benches down side by side, never thinking that one might be the resting place of a man and a girl, while the other might hold the fond parent of the girl or a chronic dyspeptic, to whom the sweet nothings from the first bench are as a red rag to a bull. It is unconscious cruelty to both.

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Merely "Married."

Just as the moon shining on the tall bronze statues in the park accentuate the lights and shadows, so the lights and shadows of real life are drawn more clearly in these parks after dark than they are in the busiest streets of the city. For all the stories that the benches would tell if they could talk would not be of true loves that run smooth. There would be the story of many a heartache, of disappointed ambition, of hopeless devotion, of faithlessness, of deceit, and of crime. A pitiful story was revealed to a passer through Lafayette square only a few days ago. A man and a woman sat on one of the more secluded benches. She was crying bitterly, though softly, and the man was trying not to look foolish. The one word which she said over and over more to herself than to him was "married." It told the story in a nutshell. She had probably met this man in that very park or perhaps in some other similar place and, attracted by his appearance, had become acquainted with him and learned to love him in subsequent meetings, perhaps on that same bench. But at last she had found out that the man was already married, and had only been having a good time at her expense.

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Turning on the Lights.

Now and then boys with the fiendishness which seems to be inborn in all of them come to the parks after dark armed with dark lanterns and turn them suddenly on unsuspected couples with disastrous results. Muffled curses, squeals of fright and embarrassed laughter follow these exploits; sometimes the enraged lover gives chase and whales a certain amount of satisfaction out of the small boy.

Besides the shady nooks which the Government, the river, and the open country offer to the earnest seekers, Washington can provide them with several to which admission is charged. The joys of Cabin John Bridge, of Marshall Hall, Mt. Vernon—the latter to be sure more often visited by the thousands of young married people who come here on their honeymoons—are not to be sneered at by members of the fraternity of lovers. The deck of the Marshall Hall boat on its return trip after dark presents to the view of the curious more loving scenes than any other area of the same size in the country. It's hard at times to tell where one leaves off and the other begins and an ice pick would be necessary to separate them.

SPRING AND LOVE

In the spring a deeper iris
Glistens on the burnished dove;
In the spring a young man's fancy
Lightly turns to thoughts of love.
—Tennyson.

THE RUSE OF THE BRIDE AND GROOM

"I have traveled as a Pullman conductor for twenty-five years and have seen hundreds of newly married couples," said a man with a blue suit and bright brass buttons as a Santa Fe train came into the Union depot the other day, "but not until this trip did I ever see a bride and groom who could keep the public from knowing they were on a honeymoon trip. But this couple about which I speak certainly did fool me to perfection.

"A handsome young man and a blushing, beautiful girl got in my car at Chicago as we started West. I noticed that the man sat down very selfishly and immediately began reading a newspaper, as if he didn't know a winsome little woman was sitting beside him. He had a cool and haughty air about him and I rather disliked him for his lack of courtesy. Pretty soon I went around to collect tickets and asked him for them. Without taking his eyes from his paper he said, 'Mary, give the man the tickets,' and went on reading.

"'You know I haven't the tickets,' quickly replied the woman. 'Then you've lost them,' retorted the angry husband, 'for I gave them to you before we got on the train.'

"'You didn't, either,' his wife replied.

"'I did.'

"'You didn't.'

"'I know I did.'

"'And I know you didn't. Do you mean to say I tell what isn't true?'

"'No, but I'm sure you've lost the tickets,' replied the husband with a look of extreme disgust in his countenance.

"I saw trouble was brewing and told them I would return later to get the tickets," continued the Pullman conductor as he told his story to a crowd around him. "When I went back the man was reading and the woman was pouting. The tickets were in a seat across from them, and I checked them up. Not a word was spoken as I returned the tickets to the woman and left.

"A fellow in the car asked me if that was a newly married couple, and I informed him it certainly wasn't, for both man and woman fussed too much for that. I offered to bet him they had been married ten years.

"Well, we finally reached El Paso, Tex., where the man and woman were to get off the train. As the train slowed up the man called me to him and said:

"'Look here, old man, you've been rather nice to us and we want to let you into a little secret. We were married just before getting on this train. That fuss about the tickets was all arranged before we started and I bought the newspaper just to make the bluff good. Don't you think we behave well for bride and groom?'"—Kansas City Journal.

The Making of Umbrellas

SOME ONE has estimated the American production of umbrellas for 1904 at 15,000,000. If he has erred in his prediction the number is too small. Few purchasers of this universal necessity appreciate the size of the umbrella industry. The public can never be said to be adequately supplied with umbrellas. No article of either American or foreign manufacture is so apt to be lost, strayed or stolen at just the time one wants it most.

"Umbra" is the Latin word for "shade." It was for shade that the earliest umbrellas were used. According to our encyclopedias umbrellas figured in the sculpture work of Egypt, Nineveh and Persepolis. In Greece and Rome the umbrella came into use quite extensively, but not until about 300 or 400 years ago was it introduced into England and then only as a shade from the sun or as a mark of royalty. And even when umbrellas became quite common among women men did not carry them. Today in England, like in the United States, the making of umbrellas is an enormous industry and England is also an exporter of her wares in this line, while in earlier times her own supply was made by hand in India or Spain. The factory-made umbrella is said to date back a little more than 200 years, so it can readily be appreciated that this article, with which we are now so familiar and which can be bought for such a small sum, is really a modern invention as far as its practical and extensive use is concerned.

A hat factory does not manufacture either the felt or the straw from which hats are made. This is true of many lines of industry with reference to the raw materials, not least of which is the making of umbrellas. The cloth from which umbrellas are made comes to the umbrella factory proper in huge rolls. The steel ribs are usually made in factories which do nothing else. At the umbrella factory the cloth is arranged in the desired lengths and widths upon a splitting table preparatory to being cut and is held down tightly by weights. A thickness of seventy-five or more plies is not unusual. Into this the workman places a long-bladed knife with a wonderfully sharp edge. This knife, guided partly by a slot in the table beneath, and partly by the skillful hand of the workman, rapidly accomplishes the desired result.

The goods next go to a number of girls who are engaged in operating hemming machines, which often attain a speed of more than 3,000 revolutions a minute. It is not unusual for an experienced operator at one of these machines to turn out 1,200 yards a day of hemmed goods. When the hemming work has been accomplished the goods must again be cut, the number of separate pieces depending upon the number of ribs in the umbrella. In cutting these pieces a knife is used as before, together with a pattern of the desired size.

Before the covers and the frames are united the triangular pieces of cloth heretofore described are sewed together, and this work is also done by the powerful sewing machines. The covers are then brought to the tables, where girls work at sewing them on, one set of operators being employed to sew the cover about the rod of the umbrella and another to attach the cover to the ribs, there often being twenty-five or thirty places where the cover must be thus attached. The number depends, of course, chiefly upon the number of ribs in the umbrella. The handle is next put in place and nicely glued. Women continue the work upon the modern umbrella by pressing it with a heavy iron, after which it goes to the inspector and then to the girls who roll it tightly and who place a cover thereon.